

Peace Building and Conflict Transformation

The quest for growth and development, harmony and justice

Our world is getting filled with people who crawl under the quest for competence and the stress of competition and of those who struggle to cope with numerous complicated issues and intricate problems. In such turbulent pursuit people of all age groups begin to exhibit in frustration, their feelings of anger, resentment, revenge, unforgiving spirit, negative attitudes, aggressive behaviors, non-cooperation, hatred and many other disruptive tendencies. People feel drained emotionally and depleted spiritually and as a result human community as a whole faces serious threat of ever growing violence in all walks of life. Evidentially there is more and more breaking of relationships and lesser and lesser building of peace and mending of relationships is almost becoming remote possibility.

In a politically corrupted and unjust society every aspect of human life stands assaulted besides violence flourishes. Firstly there is social discrimination which divides the society horizontally and peculiarly in India, the society is also divided vertically. Poverty, oppression, discrimination and exploitation are rampant and breed nothing but hatred, violence and evil.

Communalism and fundamentalism sow the seeds of hate culture in human hearts. In India scenario communalism and fundamentalism is not to be understood as clashing of religious and cultural identities and ideologies but as politically orchestrated and carefully schemed moves to destroy other communities.

The globalization, privatization, liberalization organizes new ways and means of transforming middle class humans into mindless and heartless bodies that indiscriminately consume multinational products. In India this is also an indiscriminate attempt to eliminate weaker sections of the society by economic oppression. As a result of widening gulf between rich and the poor, the rest of the third and fourth world as communities is made unfit to live and therefore thought that it should be eliminated from the face of the earth. These communities, who are the victims of injustice, are now becoming potential to become anything to devastate and to destroy everything.

Such a situation threatens the very fabric of human life and will lead to mass destruction of human communities.

Here is where our mission begins and the Christian presence is felt needed. We have a very definite and significant role to play in the messed-up and perplexing global and local scenario.

What is required? What is our mission?

The message of doing peace and harmony should reach every member of the society. It should first of all reach all the Christian communities that are surviving in fragmented quarters. Doing peace must first begin in Christian communities and motivating the youth and children should bring about this change. Therefore our mission is to reach the youth and children and women to actively participate in spreading the message of peace, harmony and hope among conflicting communities within the church and among churches.

The message should also reach every segment of the society and help people to resist hatred and violence. Peace loving is not a religious activity and it does not involve in assessing the superiority of religion over others but as bare human need as oxygen and water and food. Harmony is basic human need to survive on the face of the earth. People need to be trained to condemn and reject all that destroys peace, harmony and hope.

Therefore we have conducted Training of Trainers programmes on Peace building and it is planned to conduct in two spheres firstly to the Christian communities and secondly in other communities. We planned to identify more volunteers to carry the message of peace to the communities.

1) Peace Building and Conflict Management- Training of Trainers Programme:

i) At Tirunelveli: Peace Building and Conflict Management Programme was held at Tirunelveli at Salvation Army Church, Tirunelveli. 35 Persons participated in the training.



The topics covered under the training programme are:

Introduction and Approaches to Peace Building;

Skills on peace building such as- Creative Response; Empathy; Co-operative Power; Managing Emotions; Mapping Conflict; Negotiations; Meditation; Broadening of Perspectives.



ii) At Thoothukudi: Peace Building training programme was conducted at Good News Centre, Thoothukudi. Youth from the CSI Thoothukudi Diocese and students from the Catholic Church Seminary participated in the training. About 55 persons underwent the training.

iii) At Kanyakumari: The Training of Trainers in Peace Building and Conflict Management was held at Thozhamai Illam, Kanyakumari. This programme was mainly conducted for the Theologically Trained Women of India, Tamilnadu Region. About 32 Women from different denominations attended the training programme



4. Kodaikanal:



The training of Trainers in Peace Building and Conflict transformation was held at Andivilla Church, Kodaikanal. Rev. Paul Pragasam, the Director, Community Service Centre was the resource person. About 35 participants from different denominations, most of them from Independent Churches, attended the training programme.

5. At Thirupathur: The training was held at Christhukula Ashram, Thirupathur. About 29 participants mostly from India Evangelical Lutheran Church, Independent pastors and Bible women, attended the training programme



6. At Madharapakkam, Gummidipoondi: The Training Programme was conducted for the Youth at Madharapakkam & Gummidipoondi. About 25 youth participated. Rev. Augustine & Rev. Alex organized the programme.

Rev. Paul Pragasam was the Resource and took all the sessions. The youth committed themselves to build peace among their community.



7. At Guindy, Chennai: The Training of Peace Building and Conflict Management was held at Chennai for one day. Approximately 30 youth participated in this programme.

8. Thiruchirapalli : The Programme was held at Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trichirapalli. The Rev. Sukarno, Vice-President, TELC offered the Opening prayer. Rev. George Samuel, Convenor, TCC-ELC informed the participants about the purpose of the training programme.



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Paul Vasant Kumar, Bishop CSI Trichy-Tanjore Diocese & the Rt. Rev. H. Martin, Bishop, TELC presented the inaugural address. The pastors and lay leaders actively participated in the group discussions and

general discussions. Almost all of them committed to involve themselves in peace building activities in their churches. About 48 Pastors, CSI and TELC, and Lay Leaders attended the training programme.



9. At Tarangambadi – (Tranquebar) Tranquebar was founded in 14th Century by the Danish East India Company. When we go to Tarangambadi, we are always reminded of the first Protestant Missionaries Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau who came from Germany and began their ministry at Tranquebar. One of their pioneering works was the translation of the Bible into Tamil language, which is the greatest gift we received from God through those missionaries.

The training programme was held at T.E.L.C. Spiritual Centre, Tarangambai. About 85 persons participated in the training programme.



Manickam College, Poraiyar; Teachers from TELC Schools, Lay leaders, Youth, Women's fellowship members.

The participants were Pastors from TELC and CSI Churches, Professors and Lecturers from Bishop



The participants actively involved in group discussions and also in peace building activities. All the participants assured to involve themselves in peace building activities in their respective field.

10. Dharapuram: The training of Trainers in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation was held at CASA Resource Centre, Dharapuram. The Rt. Rev. B. Srinivasan, former Bishop of the CSI Trichy-Tanjore Diocese inaugurated the training programme. Mrs. Grace Srinivasan also participated along with the Bishop. The CASA provided the place and shared part of the expenses for the training programme. Rev. V. Raja Monsingh, DCC Chairman, Dharapuram organized the programme. About 34 Pastors, Lay Leaders, Women fellowships & Youth attended the training programme



11. Coimbatore: The training of Trainers in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation was held at Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Coimbatore. Rt. Rev. Dr. William Moses, former Moderator and former Bishop, CSI Coimbatore Diocese took a session. Rev. Edwin Jeyakumar, Superintending Minister, TELC, Coimbatore organized the programme. About 52 Pastors, Lay Leaders, Women fellowship members & Youth attended the training programme.



Feed Back/ Beneficiary's statements from some of the participants:

“Usually we try to do peace-making. Thanks for enlightening the difference between ‘peace making and peace building’. Really all the bible studies are very fantastic. ‘Conflict transformation’ is a relevant topic dealt with good examples and teachings. Exercises are very enjoyable. We expect you to have another training for our young people so that our church may come out of the traditional monotonous worship to relevant active, action oriented ministry” Rev. C. Karunakaran, Uthiyur Pastorate.

“Through Tamilnad Christian Council Training Programme, you have broadened our perspectives. I have understood the correct meaning of Truth, Justice, Peace and Authority. Through the video programme, I learnt to develop self-confidence and through activities, I learnt about the power we can get by working together as a team. I will share and communicate the knowledge I gain through this training programme to others immediately”. – Rev. D. Sudhakar, Thayampalayam Pastorate.



12. At Pudukottai

About 45 independent pastors, women, youth attended the programme.

13. At. Chigleput : 52 Women from 4 Self Help Groups attended the programme.

Feed back: Thanks for the Programme. Your teaching made us to think a lot. I learnt many new things. Building Peace is very essential issue in to-day's violent situation prevailing in all places. The bible studies are very excellent and thought provoking. I will share and communicate the knowledge I gained through this training programme with my congregations and others. Please conduct more such trainings and invite me wherever you conduct such programmes. - Pastor R. Moses Suganthan, Udayarkulam.



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Learnt the difference between Peace making and Peace building. Your bible studies make me to re-read the bible with different perspective. Peace-building and conflict transformation is the relevant topic for the present world. I thank Tamilnad Christian Council for organizing this excellent programme. We are very much benefitted. Please organize more programmes for us especially for youth. -- Pastor N.S. Mani, Equarpalam, Gumidipoondi.

We are the women of other faith. But we have learnt many things. God loves all the people. We must love every one. We must live in peace and harmony with every one without any cast or religious discrimination. We need this kind of programme, so please conduct more programmes. – Mrs. R. Navaneetham, Valam.

All the participants highly appreciated the Training and some of the participants requested us to conduct such programmes in their respective areas.



14. Gumidipoondi-

About 40 independent Church pastors attended the training programme.